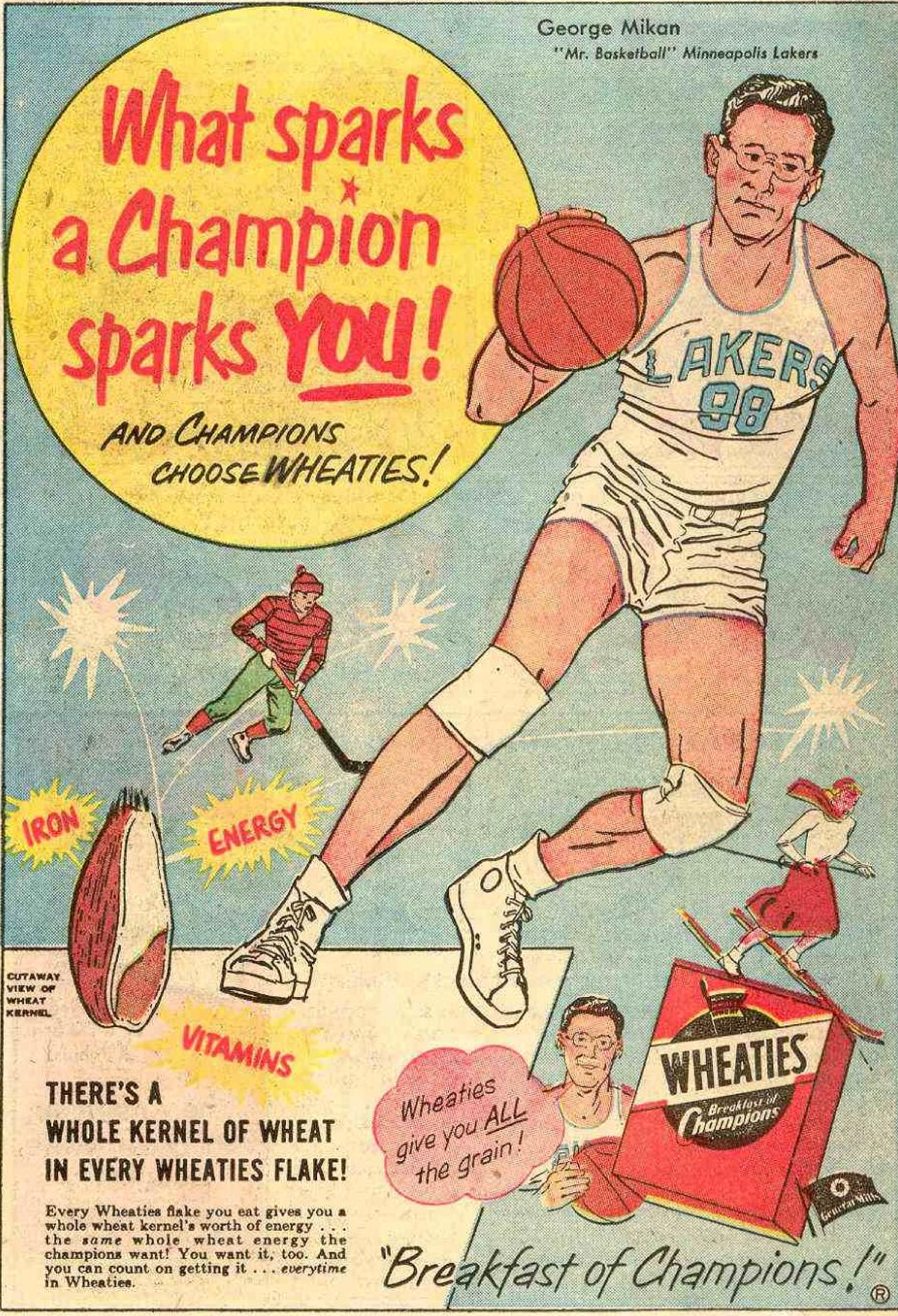
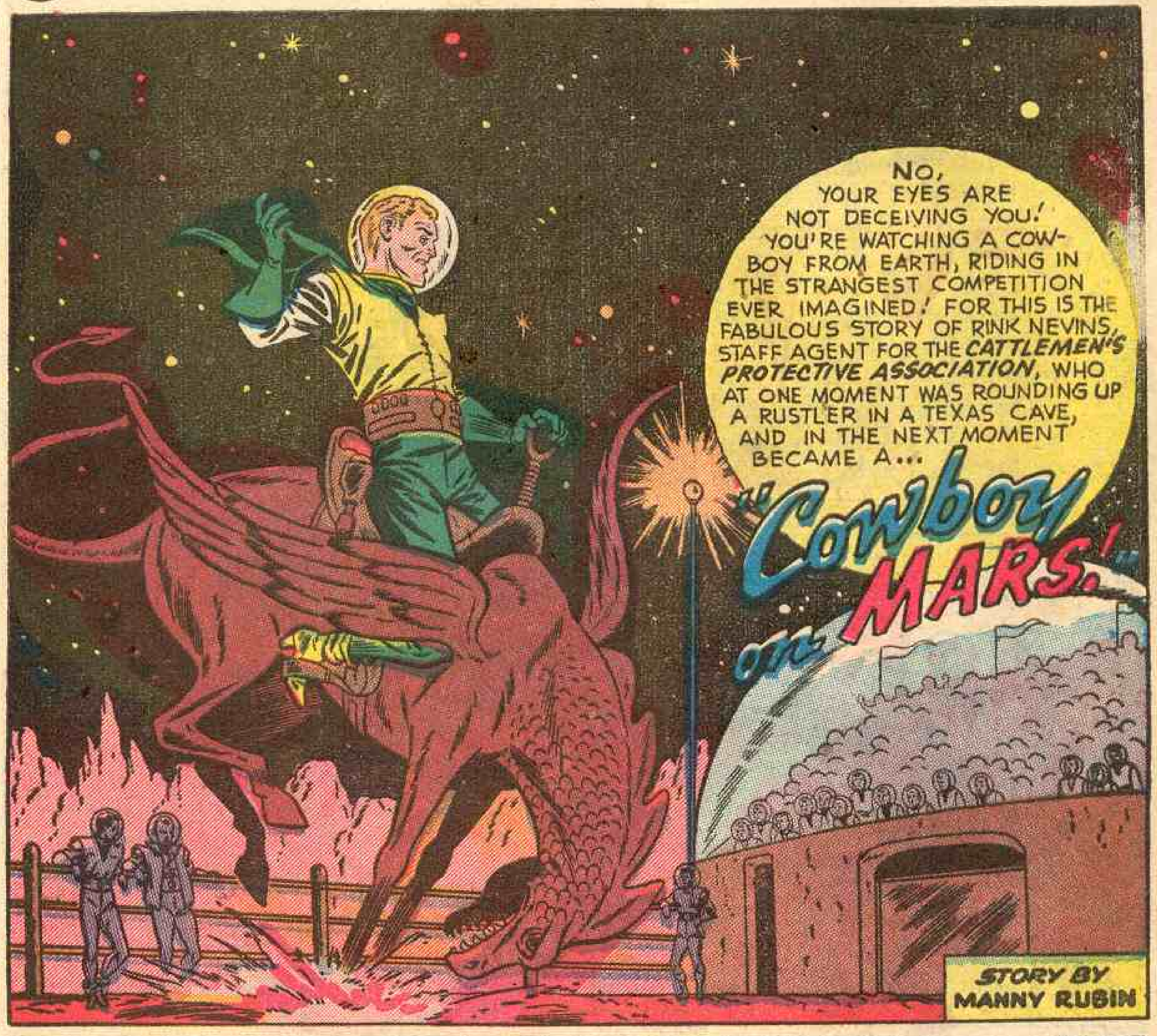
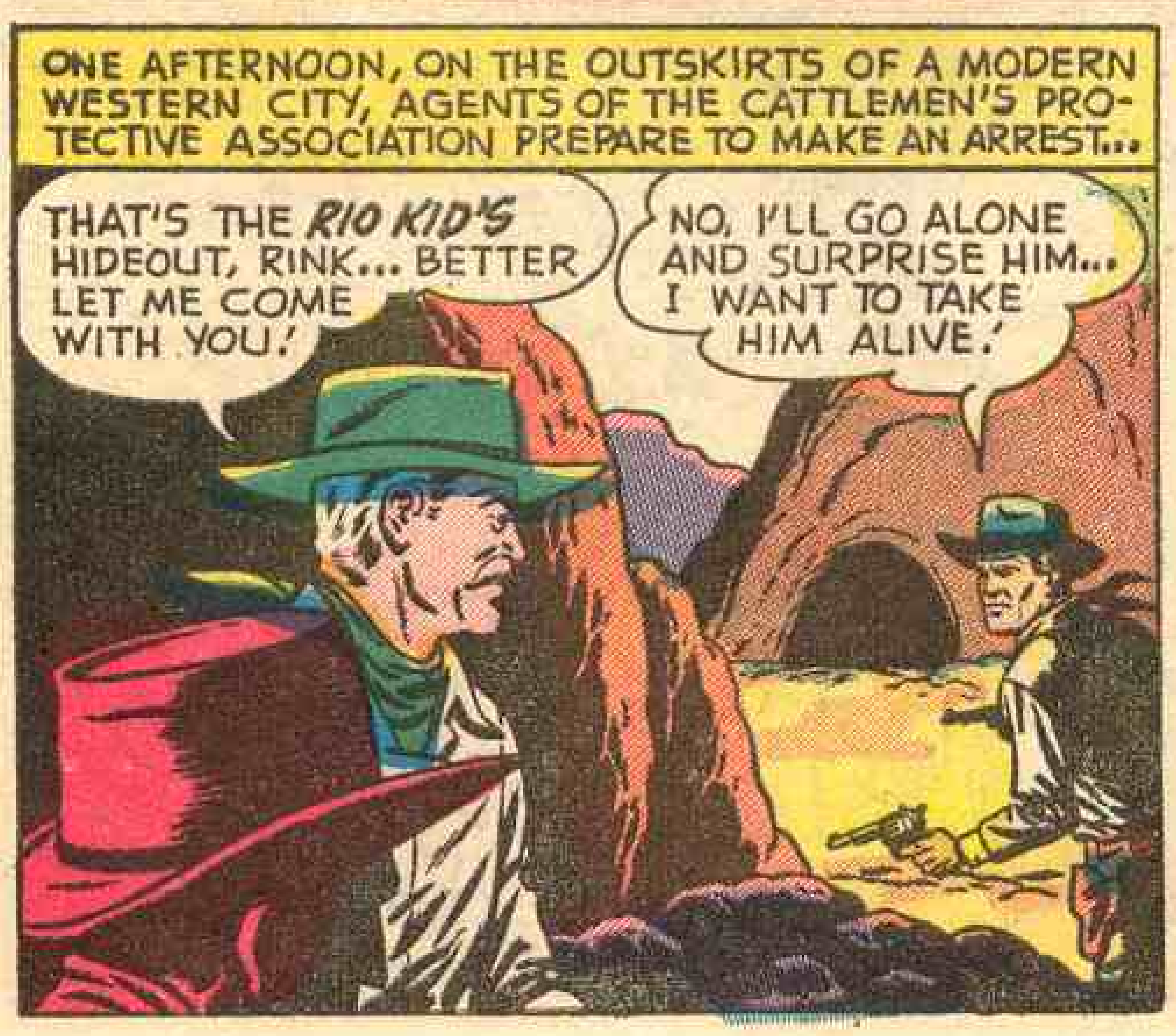
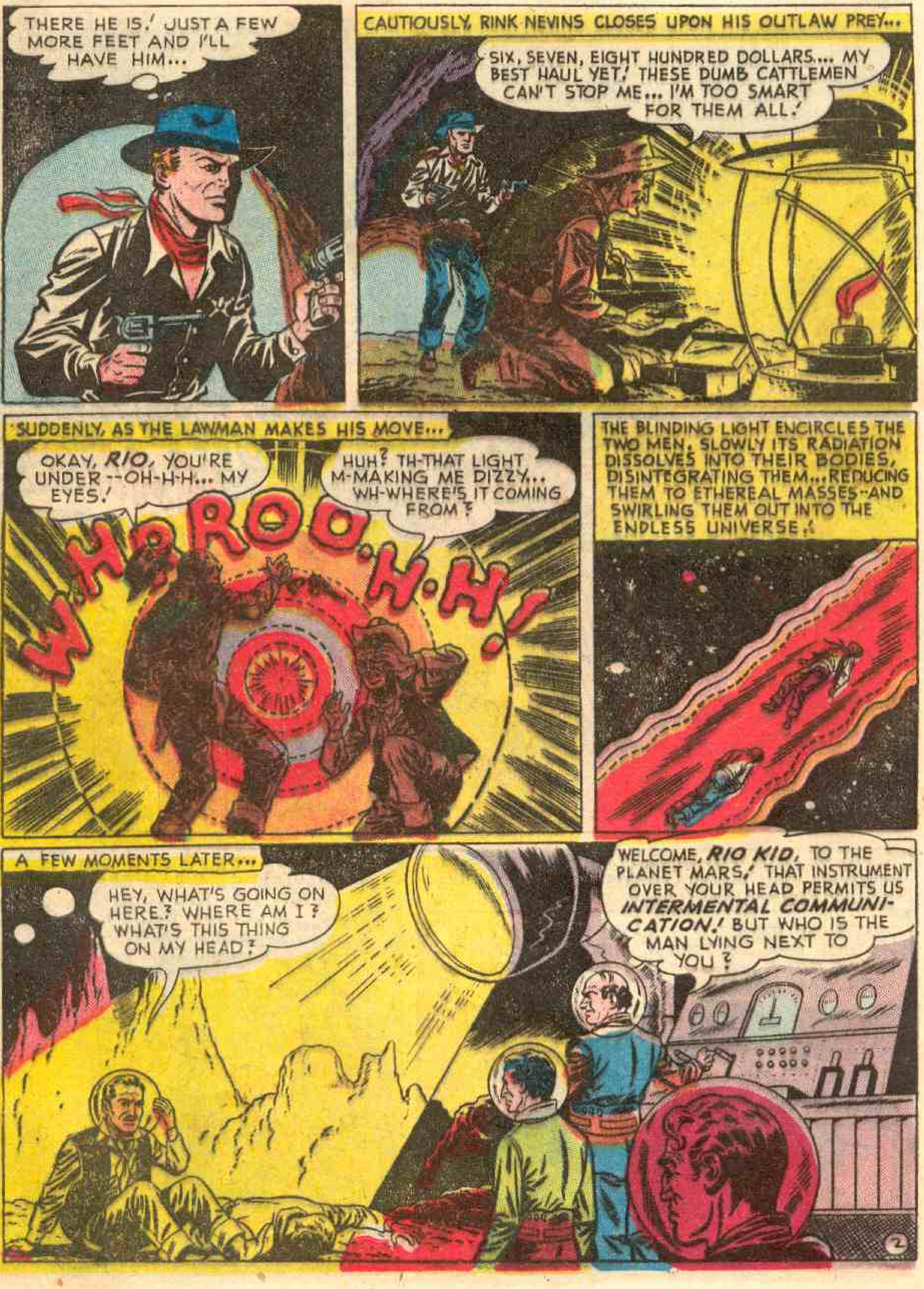

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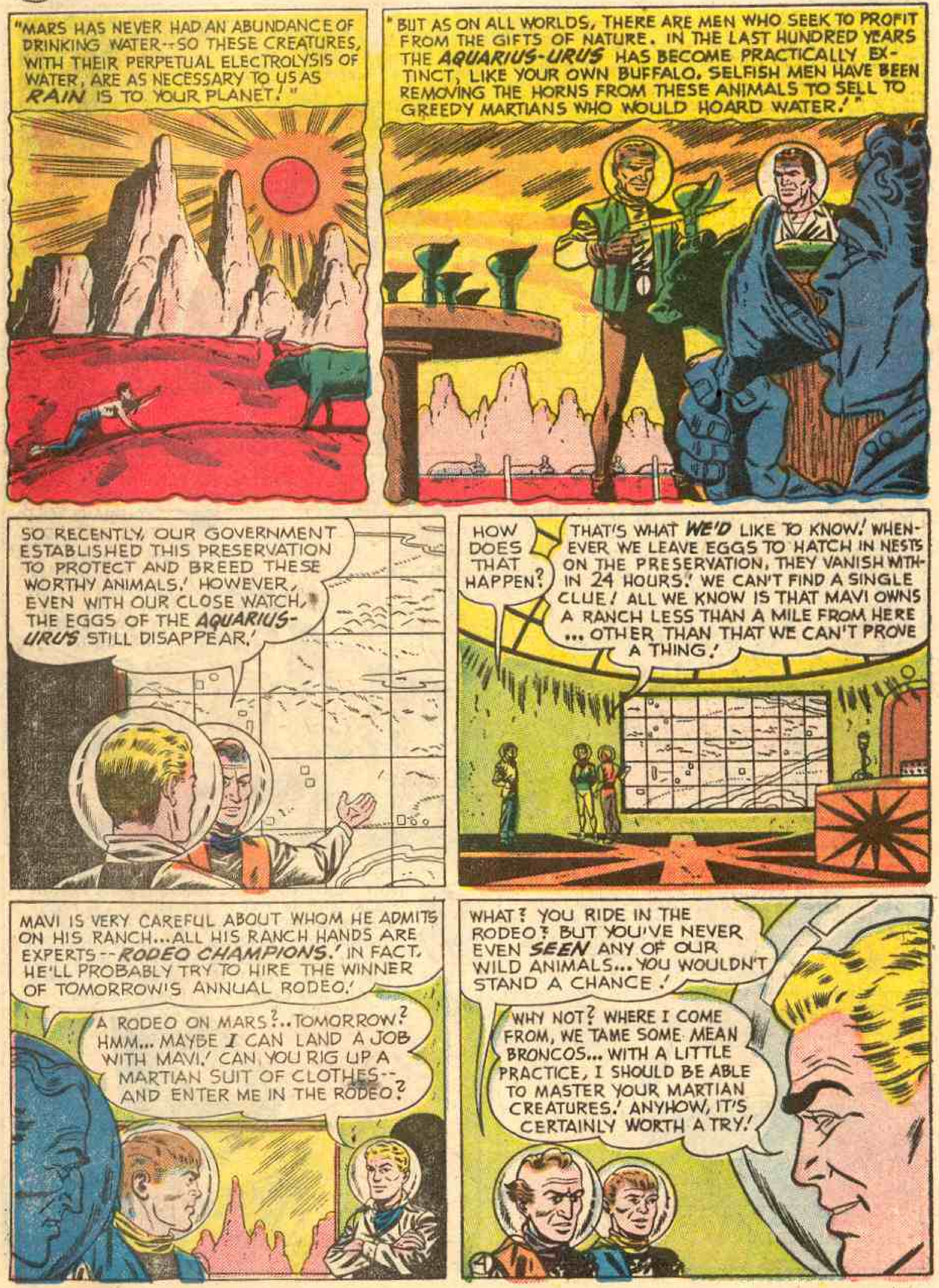

NO, YOUR EYES ARE NOT DECEIVING YOU! YOU'RE WATCHING A COWBOY FROM EARTH, RIDING IN THE STRANGEST COMPETITION EVER IMAGINED! FOR THIS IS THE FABULOUS STORY OF RINK NEVINS, STAFF AGENT FOR THE *CATTLEMEN'S PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION*, WHO AT ONE MOMENT WAS ROUNDING UP A RUSTLER IN A TEXAS CAVE, AND IN THE NEXT MOMENT BECAME A...
"Cowboy on MARS!"
STORY BY MANNY RUBIN


ONE AFTERNOON, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A MODERN WESTERN CITY, AGENTS OF THE CATTLEMEN'S PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION PREPARE TO MAKE AN ARREST...
THAT'S THE *RIO KID'S* HIDEOUT, RINK... BETTER LET ME COME WITH YOU!
NO, I'LL GO ALONE AND SURPRISE HIM... I WANT TO TAKE HIM ALIVE!

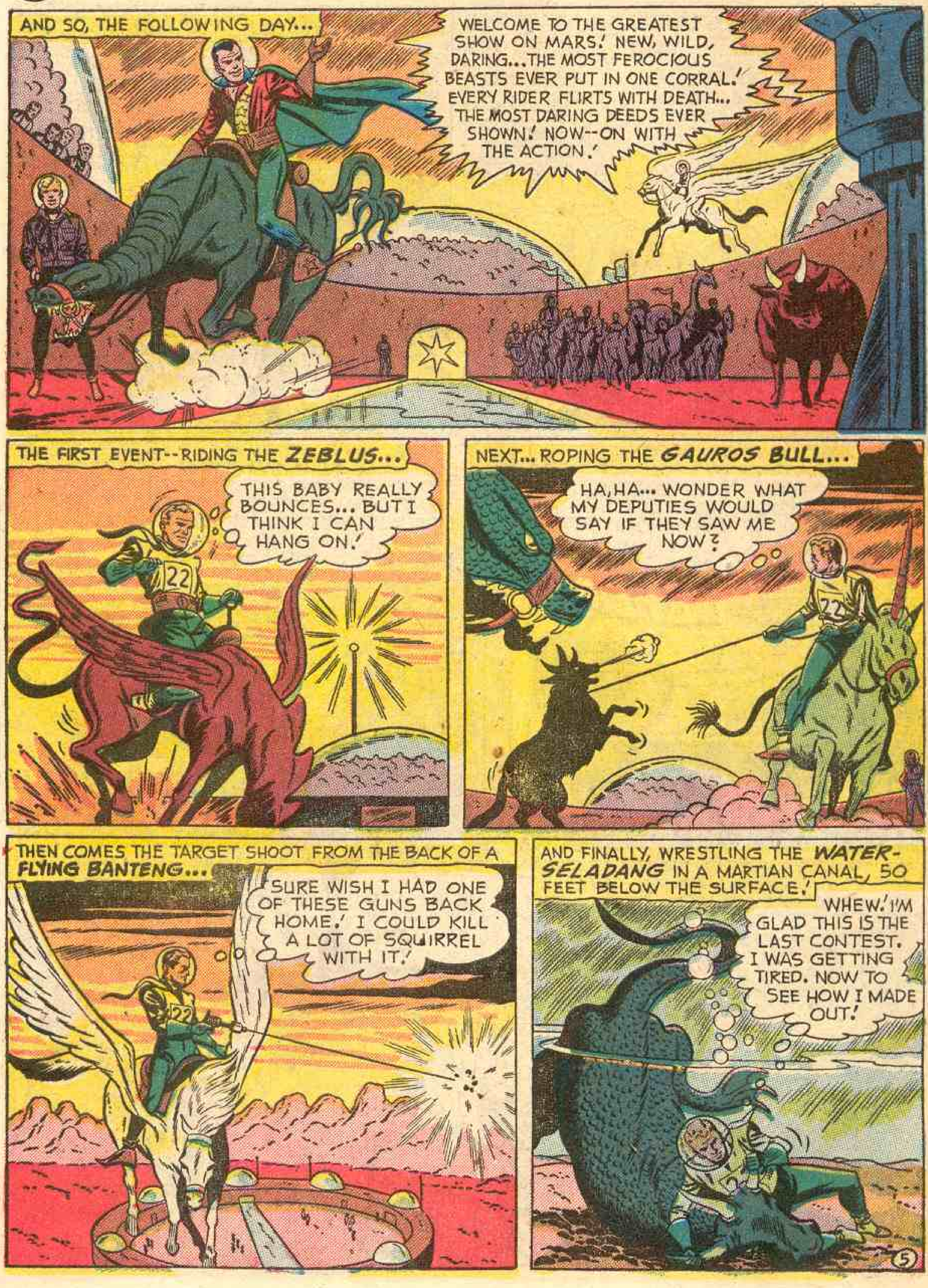

I HOPE I CAN CATCH HIM UNAWARES... WE'VE BEEN AFTER HIM TOO LONG TO LET HIM ESCAPE NOW!


THERE HE IS! JUST A FEW MORE FEET AND I'LL HAVE HIM...
CAUTIOUSLY, RINK NEVINS CLOSES UPON HIS OUTLAW PREY...
SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT HUNDRED DOLLARS... MY BEST HAUL YET! THESE DUMB CATTLEMEN CAN'T STOP ME... I'M TOO SMART FOR THEM ALL!
SUDDENLY, AS THE LAWMAN MAKES HIS MOVE...
OKAY, RIO, YOU'RE UNDER --OH-H-H... MY EYES!
HUH? TH-THAT LIGHT M-MAKING ME DIZZY.. WH-WHERE'S IT COMING FROM?
WHRROO-H-H!
THE BLINDING LIGHT ENCIRCLES THE TWO MEN. SLOWLY ITS RADIATION DISSOLVES INTO THEIR BODIES, DISINTEGRATING THEM...REDUCING THEM TO ETHEREAL MASSES--AND SWIRLING THEM OUT INTO THE ENDLESS UNIVERSE!
A FEW MOMENTS LATER...
HEY, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHERE AM I? WHAT'S THIS THING ON MY HEAD?
WELCOME, RIO KID, TO THE PLANET MARS! THAT INSTRUMENT OVER YOUR HEAD PERMITS US INTERMENTAL COMMUNICATION! BUT WHO IS THE MAN LYING NEXT TO YOU?
2


I NEVER SAW THIS GUY BEFORE! WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS HOW I GOT HERE... WHAT D'YA WANT WITH ME?
WE BROUGHT YOU HERE IN OUR ATOMIC-SPACE TRANSMITTER BECAUSE WE'VE WATCHED YOU OPERATE ON EARTH FOR A LONG TIME AND WANT YOU TO LEAD US!
LEAD YOU IN WHAT? WHEN I DO A JOB, I GOT TO KNOW WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME!
HAVE NO FEAR, RIO KID... MY NAME IS MAVI, AND IF YOU WILL COME TO MY RANCH NOW, I WILL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING! THERE IS MORE WEALTH TO BE MADE HERE THAN YOU EVER DREAMED OF!
MOMENTS AFTER THE CONSPIRATORS DEPART...
SO MAVI DID IMPORT THE EARTH RUSTLER, AS WE SUSPECTED! BUT WHO IS THIS STRANGER THAT THEY LEFT TO DIE?
LOOK--HE WEARS A BADGE SIMILAR TO OUR OWN! PERHAPS HE TOO IS ON THE SIDE OF LAW AND ORDER! LET US BRING HIM TO HEADQUARTERS!
TWO HOURS LATER, IN THE MAIN HEADQUARTERS OF THE MARTIAN PRESERVATION AGENCY...
EVERYTHING YOU HAVE TOLD ME SO FAR IS AMAZING! BUT WHAT REASON COULD THIS MAVI HAVE FOR WANTING A BAD HOMBRE LIKE THE RIO KID?
YOU HAVE TOLD US THAT BACK ON EARTH THE RIO KID IS A NOTORIOUS RUSTLER! I THINK THAT IS ALL THE EXPLANATION NEEDED!
"FOR MANY CENTURIES, OUR MOST VALUABLE LIVESTOCK HERE ON MARS HAS BEEN THE AQUARIUS-URUS! THIS ANIMAL, IN ADDITION TO SUPPLYING US WITH FOOD AND CLOTHING, HAS A SPECIAL QUALITY THAT IS IRREPLACEABLE..."
"...FOR IT IS EQUIPPED WITH A HOLLOW HORN THAT FURNISHES THE ANIMAL WITH WATER FROM THE DAY IT IS BORN UNTIL IT DIES. DUE TO A SPECIAL PHOTOSYNTHETIC LINING WITHIN THIS HORN A CATALYCTIC REACTION TAKES PLACE WHENEVER THE SUN'S RAYS STRIKE THE HORN. THE HORN ABSORBS OXYGEN FROM THE AIR AND CONVERTS IT INTO CLEAR PRECIOUS WATER."



"MARS HAS NEVER HAD AN ABUNDANCE OF DRINKING WATER--SO THESE CREATURES, WITH THEIR PERPETUAL ELECTROLYSIS OF WATER, ARE AS NECESSARY TO US AS RAIN IS TO YOUR PLANET!"
"BUT AS ON ALL WORLDS, THERE ARE MEN WHO SEEK TO PROFIT FROM THE GIFTS OF NATURE. IN THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS THE AQUARIUS-URUS HAS BECOME PRACTICALLY EX-TINCT, LIKE YOUR OWN BUFFALO. SELFISH MEN HAVE BEEN REMOVING THE HORNS FROM THESE ANIMALS TO SELL TO GREEDY MARTIANS WHO WOULD HOARD WATER!"
SO RECENTLY, OUR GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED THIS PRESERVATION TO PROTECT AND BREED THESE WORTHY ANIMALS! HOWEVER, EVEN WITH OUR CLOSE WATCH, THE EGGS OF THE AQUARIUS-URUS STILL DISAPPEAR!
HOW DOES THAT HAPPEN?
THAT'S WHAT WE'D LIKE TO KNOW! WHEN-EVER WE LEAVE EGGS TO HATCH IN NESTS ON THE PRESERVATION, THEY VANISH WITH-IN 24 HOURS! WE CAN'T FIND A SINGLE CLUE! ALL WE KNOW IS THAT MAVI OWNS A RANCH LESS THAN A MILE FROM HERE ... OTHER THAN THAT WE CAN'T PROVE A THING!
MAVI IS VERY CAREFUL ABOUT WHOM HE ADMITS ON HIS RANCH...ALL HIS RANCH HANDS ARE EXPERTS--RODEO CHAMPIONS! IN FACT, HE'LL PROBABLY TRY TO HIRE THE WINNER OF TOMORROW'S ANNUAL RODEO!
A RODEO ON MARS?..TOMORROW? HMM... MAYBE I CAN LAND A JOB WITH MAVI! CAN YOU RIG UP A MARTIAN SUIT OF CLOTHES--AND ENTER ME IN THE RODEO?
WHAT? YOU RIDE IN THE RODEO? BUT YOU'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN ANY OF OUR WILD ANIMALS... YOU WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE!
WHY NOT? WHERE I COME FROM, WE TAME SOME MEAN BRONCOS... WITH A LITTLE PRACTICE, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO MASTER YOUR MARTIAN CREATURES! ANYHOW, IT'S CERTAINLY WORTH A TRY!



AND SO, THE FOLLOWING DAY...
WELCOME TO THE GREATEST SHOW ON MARS! NEW, WILD, DARING...THE MOST FEROCIOUS BEASTS EVER PUT IN ONE CORRAL! EVERY RIDER FLIRTS WITH DEATH... THE MOST DARING DEEDS EVER SHOWN! NOW--ON WITH THE ACTION!
THE FIRST EVENT--RIDING THE ZEBLUS...
THIS BABY REALLY BOUNCES... BUT I THINK I CAN HANG ON!
22
NEXT... ROPING THE GAUROS BULL...
HA, HA... WONDER WHAT MY DEPUTIES WOULD SAY IF THEY SAW ME NOW?
THEN COMES THE TARGET SHOOT FROM THE BACK OF A FLYING BANTENG...
SURE WISH I HAD ONE OF THESE GUNS BACK HOME! I COULD KILL A LOT OF SQUIRREL WITH IT!
22
AND FINALLY, WRESTLING THE WATER-SELADANG IN A MARTIAN CANAL, 50 FEET BELOW THE SURFACE!
WHEW! I'M GLAD THIS IS THE LAST CONTEST. I WAS GETTING TIRED. NOW TO SEE HOW I MADE OUT!


RISING TO THE SURFACE, RINK LEARNS THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES...
THE GRAND WINNER OF THIS YEAR'S RODEO... CONTESTANT NUMBER 22.!
GREAT WORK, RINK... YOU WERE TERRIFIC! AND JUST TO PROVE IT, HERE COMES MAVI AND THE RIO KID... GOOD LUCK!
WHATEVER HAPPENS, I'LL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOU BY THE POCKET RADIO YOU GAVE ME! SEE YOU LATER!
A MOMENT LATER...
THAT WAS NICE RIDING, STRANGER! HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK FOR US?
THAT ALL DEPENDS, MISTER! I'M NOT LOOKING FOR ANY OLD JOB... I'M OUT FOR BIG STAKES... IF YOU GET WHAT I MEAN!
HE SOUNDS LIKE JUST THE MAN WE NEED, EH, RIO? LET'S GO TO MY RANCH AND ACQUAINT HIM WITH SOME OF HIS... ER... DUTIES!
22
LATER, INSIDE MAVI'S STRONGHOLD...
THIS IS OUR MAIN BUSINESS--REMOVING THE HORNS OF THE AQUARIUS-URUS AND SELLING THEM. YOU SEE, THE RARER THEY BECOME, THE MORE PEOPLE WILL PAY FOR THEM!
NOT BAD... BUT HOW DO YOU GET THEM OFF THE GOVERNMENT PRESERVATION?
HA, HA... WE DON'T STEAL THE HORNS! WE RAISE OUR OWN ANIMALS, WITH EGGS STOLEN FROM RIGHT UNDER THE GOVERNMENT AGENTS' NOSES! TONIGHT, YOU'LL SEE HOW WE OPERATE WHEN WE RAID THE NORTH SECTION OF THE PRESERVATION!
AFTERWARD, ALONE IN HIS ROOM, RINK CONTACTS THE MARTIAN PRESERVATION AGENTS...
THEY'RE PLANNING A RAID ON THE NORTH SECTION OF THE PRESERVATION! HAVE ALL YOUR MEN READY... I THINK WE CAN CATCH THEM TONIGHT!
NICE WORK, RINK... WE'LL BE THERE!
AND AT MIDNIGHT...
LUCKY FOR US THE AGENTS DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS ABANDONED CANAL THAT RUNS RIGHT INTO THE PRESERVATION!
HEY, MAVI... WHAT'S IN THESE CAGES? WHY DID WE BRING THEM ALONG?
DON'T BE SO CURIOUS, WISE-GUY!


SOON...
THIS IS THE SPOT... OPEN THE CAGES AND LET'S GET STARTED.'
BUT THESE ARE ONLY WEASELS.' WHAT DO YOU WANT THEM FOR?
YOU'LL SEE IN A MINUTE... LET 'EM GO AND WATCH WHAT HAPPENS.'
AND AS THE LITTLE ANIMALS ARE SET FREE...
SO THAT'S HOW IT'S DONE.' THESE WEASELS ARE TRAINED TO FETCH THE EGGS IN THEIR MOUTHS.' I HOPE THE AGENTS ARE WATCHING ALL THIS.'
SUDDENLY, A BLAZE OF FLOODLIGHTS, AND...
HUH? WE'RE TRAPPED.' B-BUT HOW'D THEY FIND OUT?
OKAY, MAVI... WE CAUGHT YOU THIS TIME.' PUT UP YOUR HANDS AND DON'T TRY ANY TRICKS.'
THEY'LL NEVER GET ME! I'M TOO SMART FOR THESE MARTIANS.'
NO, YOU DON'T, RIO.' YOU AND I HAVE A SCORE TO SETTLE.'
I'VE WAITED FOR THIS A LONG TIME.' I HOPE YOU CAN SEE STARS ON MARS.'
OHHH...
CRACK!


AND SO, PRESENTLY...
GREAT JOB, RINK! WE CAPTURED EVERY ONE OF THEM, AND ALL THE AQUARIUS-URUS EGGS ARE SAFE! WE OWE YOU A LOT!
YOU DON'T OWE ME A THING, TOLA! MY JOB WAS TO GET THE RIO KID-- AND NOW THAT I HAVE HIM, I'D LIKE TO RETURN HOME!
LATER, BACK AT PRESERVATION HEADQUARTERS...
THIS IS OUR OWN TIME CHAMBER, RINK... WE'VE SET IT SO THAT YOU'LL RETURN TO EARTH ONLY A FEW MINUTES AFTER YOU WERE FIRST BROUGHT HERE!
MY THANKS TO YOU BOTH! AND IF YOU EVER NEED ME AGAIN, I'LL BE GLAD TO HELP OUT! GOODBYE FOR NOW!
SHORTLY AFTER, ON EARTH...
RINK'S BEEN IN THERE A LONG TIME... MAYBE WE'D BETTER GO IN AND INVESTIGATE!
NO, HERE HE COMES NOW! AND HE'S GOT THE RIO KID IN HANDCUFFS!
8
WHAT HAPPENED, RINK? WAS IT A LONG CHASE?
HA, HA... IT WAS OUT OF THIS WORLD, TEX!... REALLY OUT OF THIS WORLD!
THE END


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